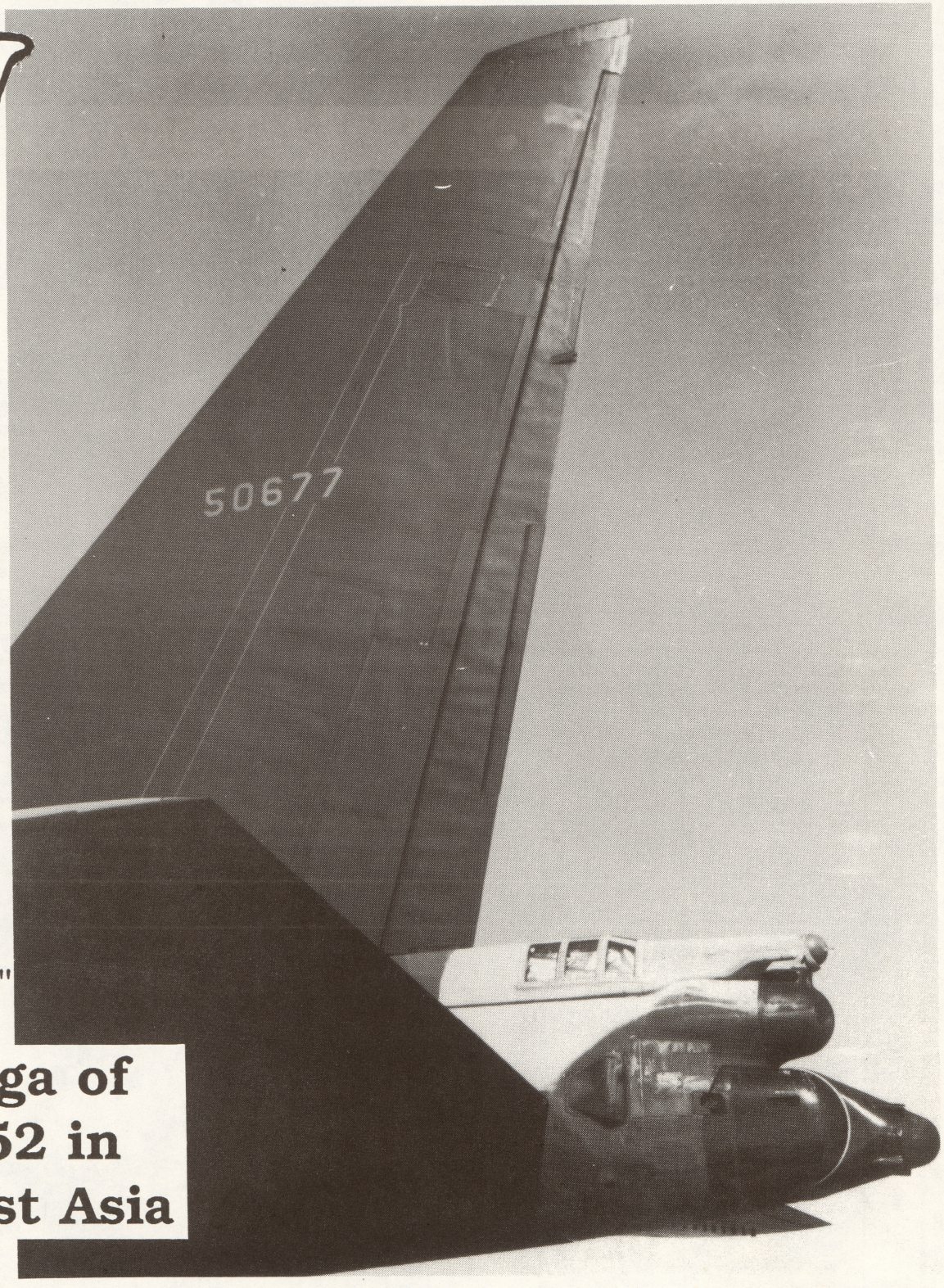
YANKEE WINGS

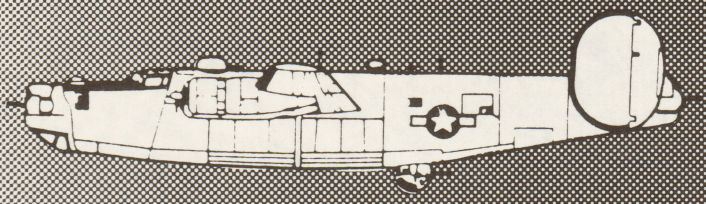


"BUFF Briefs" begins...

The Saga of the B-52 in Southeast Asia

Vol. 7 No. 3 OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE YANKEE AIR FORCE INC. May-June 1988

Yankee WINGS



What About That Dues Increase?

by Jim Hanford

The one subject in this issue that will affect the largest number of our members is the dues increase. While we have presented the facts in the Board Report, there simply wasn't room in that article to get into the discussion that preceded the vote. A starting point could be the rate of inflation. If one assumed a 6% inflation rate per year, or 24% for the four years since the last dues increase, then just to keep up with inflation would require an increase of $7.20 (24% of $30).

The Board Report also noted the close association between the dues and the budget. A look at past figures proves significant:

- In 1982 membership dues accounted for 63% of the $45,000 budget.
- In 1985 membership dues accounted for 41% of a $94,000 budget.
- In 1988 membership dues will account for only 17% of the $281,000 budget, and that is figuring in the $5.00 increase.

It quickly becomes apparent that dues are a diminishing percent of the resource pool for the YAF. And yet, while the growth of the budget assures that dues will never again assume the proportion of budget they once did, they must keep in line. Since the major income for the organization is primarily acquired during the summer, dues remain an important source of funds for the "in-between times".

Another discussion might compare the dues that similar organizations charge. This is difficult, however, because of differing structures; e.g., some offer little more than subscriptions, even though their publications do surpass *Yankee Wings*. The EAA, IPMS, and the Air Force Association are in the $35-$40 range. Dues for the Valiant Air Command, which has no museum, and one big show a year, are $75. And the Confederate Air Force is now in the neighborhood of $300. By comparison, the YAF is a broad-based, "hands on" organization, which offers ready access to aircraft and a wide range of activities at little extra cost.

Finally, if one divides the 1988 budget of $281,000 by our current membership of 1440, the result is $195.13. An organization that plans to spend $195 for each member compared with dues of $35 strikes me as a pretty good deal, and the airplanes and friendships are gravy!

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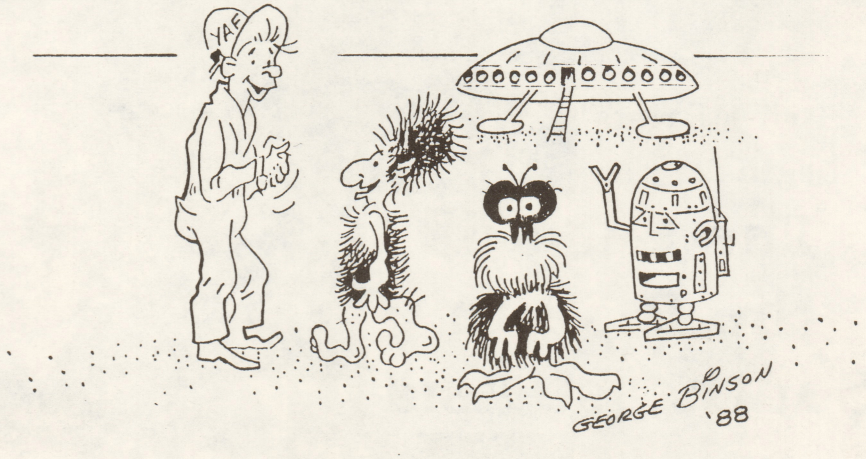
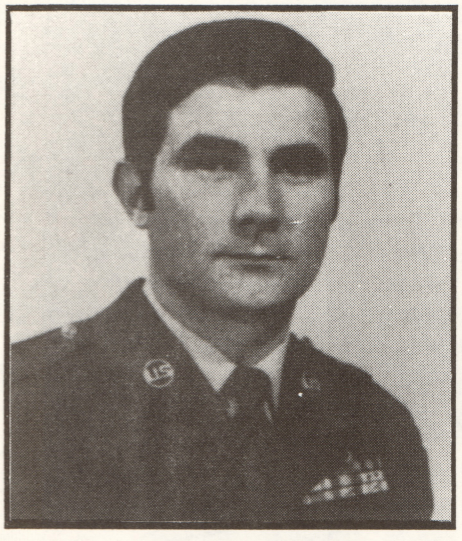


WE'D LIKE TO JOIN THE YANKEE AIR FORCE!

UNCOMMON VALOR – THE MEN AND THE MEDAL

Airman First Class John L. Levitow, USAF

by John Syler



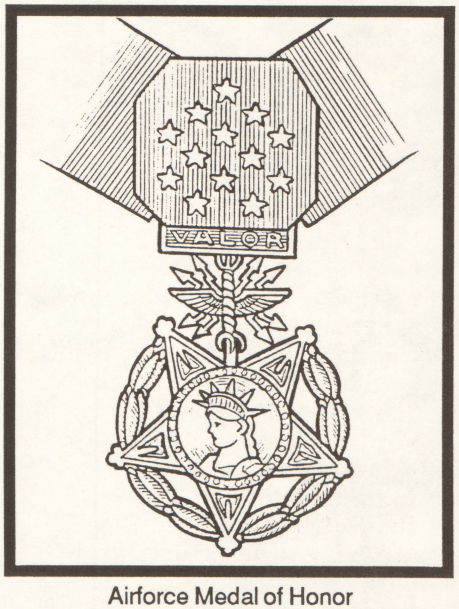
Airman First Class John L. Levitow

The citation accompanying the Medal of Honor begins, "For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty . . ."

Airman First Class John L. Levitow, UASF, was transferred to Vietnam in July, 1968, where he became a loadmaster on an AC-47 gunship operating from Bien Hoa Air Base near Saigon. On the night of February 24, 1969, he was filling in for a sick friend on the crew of "Spooky 71". They were assigned patrol duty in the vicinity of Saigon.

A loadmaster's duties included setting the timing and ignition controls on flares, which were dropped from the aircraft. These flares were used to provide light for friendly troops below, or to highlight a target for "special attention" by the guns bristling along the side of this "Puff, the magic dragon". After setting the controls, Levitow would pass the three-foot long, 27-pound cylinder to the gunner, Sgt. Ellis Owen. Owen's job was to pull the lanyard which triggered the flare's time-delayed firing mechanism, and drop the flare and its parachute out the open cargo door at the command of the pilot.

Four hours after take-off, roughly at midnight, Spooky 71 had completed firing on enemy positions near Bien Hoa, when they received a request for illumination near Long Binh, which is just north of Saigon. Major Ken Carpenter, the pilot, turned the aircraft toward Long Binh and the flashes of enemy mortars, whose positions they were to illuminate. Sgt. Owen began dropping flares as they passed over the area.



Airforce Medal of Honor
Illustration by Jim Serdenis

Suddenly the gunship was shaken violently by a tremendous blast. An enemy 82mm mortar round had landed on top of the starboard wing, and had exploded inside the wing, shaking the entire plane like a rag doll. A three-foot hole was blasted in the right side of the fuselage, sending thousands of pieces of shrapnel scything through the aircraft.

Four crewmen, including Levitow, were knocked off their feet. As Sgt. Owen fell wounded to the floor, he inadvertantly pulled the lanyard from a flare. The heavy, armed cylinder rolled back and forth across the cabin floor. In just ten seconds the flare

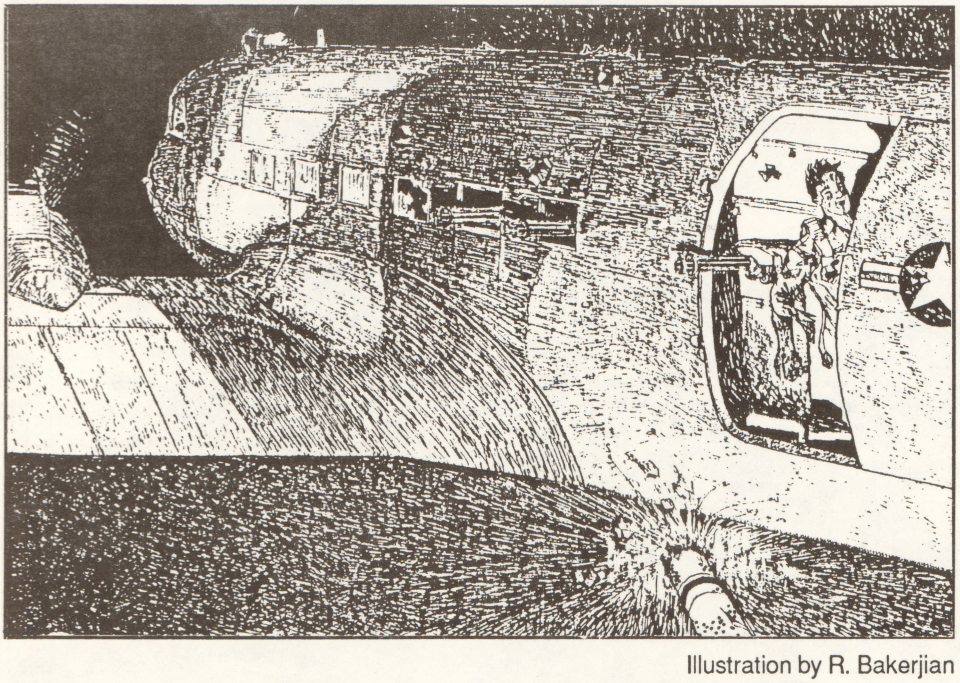


Illustration by R. Bakerjian

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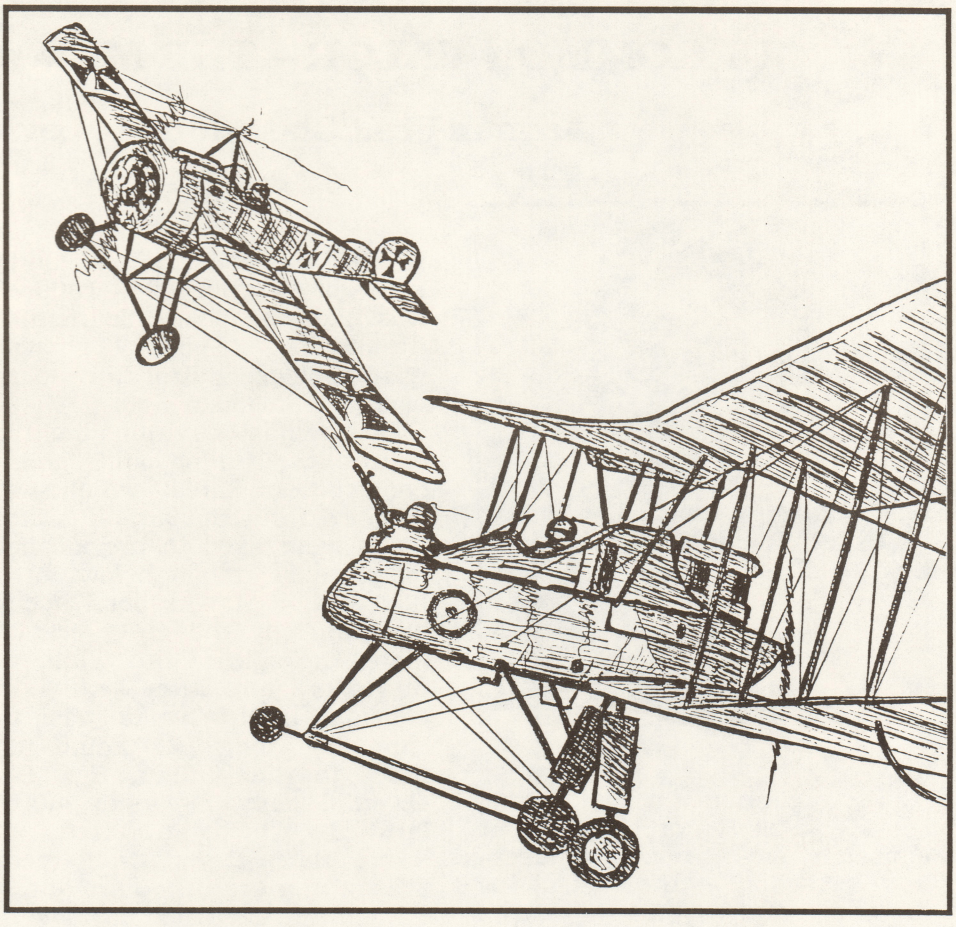


Illustration by Jim Serdenis

The Amazin' Mr. Libby

The First American Ace was not a Pilot!

Fred Libby hailed from Sterling, Colorado. He worked as a cowboy, and happened to be in Canada when World War I broke out. He immediately enlisted in the Canadian army, and by 1916 found himself in the trenches of France. Periodically the Royal Flying Corps sent out bulletins requesting volunteers from the infantry to become observer/gunners, with the possibility of an eventual commission as second lieutenant. Libby seized this opportunity to escape from the muddy trenches, as well as the hope of earning a commission. What he wasn't told was that the average life expectancy of an observer was a mere ten combat flying hours! Hence the number of observer/gunners who survived to earn a commission was very small.

Although Libby had never fired a machine gun, nor had he ever been in an airplane, he was posted to the RFC's 23rd Squadron. The same day that he arrived at their flying field, he was sent to a ground practice range for a half-hour's training in the Lewis gun. As he returned from the gunnery range, an aircraft was being readied for his first (and only) aerial training flight. The target for the gunnery passes was a fuel can on the ground. Having no goggles, he couldn't even see the target on the first pass, because of the tears in his eyes. He wiped his eyes, and on the next pass he picked up the can and emptied the entire 47 round drum at it, kicking it into the air. On his next firing pass he squeezed off another entire drum, and saw the can roll across the field. After a full morning's work, Libby went to lunch, and then lay down for a nap.

His "nooner" was interrupted by an orderly who carried an armload of heavy flying gear to his tent and informed him that he was scheduled to fly again that afternoon. Fred assumed it was another training flight, but soon discovered it was to be his first combat mission. He was assigned to fly with a pilot whose observer/gunner had just been killed. Their FE-2B was assigned to fly top cover in a position above and behind five other FE-2Bs, which was a vulnerable spot.

Passing over the front lines, Libby watched the trenches that he'd occupied the previous day, when from the right came an

(Continued on Page 11)

B-52's Role in Southeast Asia (1965)

In 1965, the major USAF aircraft of the Southeast Asian conflict were the F-105, the F-4 and the B-52. America's primary nuclear deterrent, the B-52, a high-altitude, high-speed bomber designed to deliver a few nuclear devices, began its tour in the theater as the most feared weapon in the US arsenal. In many circles, the Stratofortress is considered one of the primary reasons for the final end of US involvement in Southeast Asia and, also, at the Peace Tables. Few weapons such as the BUFF (Big Ugly Fat Fellow) could deliver the 'punch' as did the B-52.

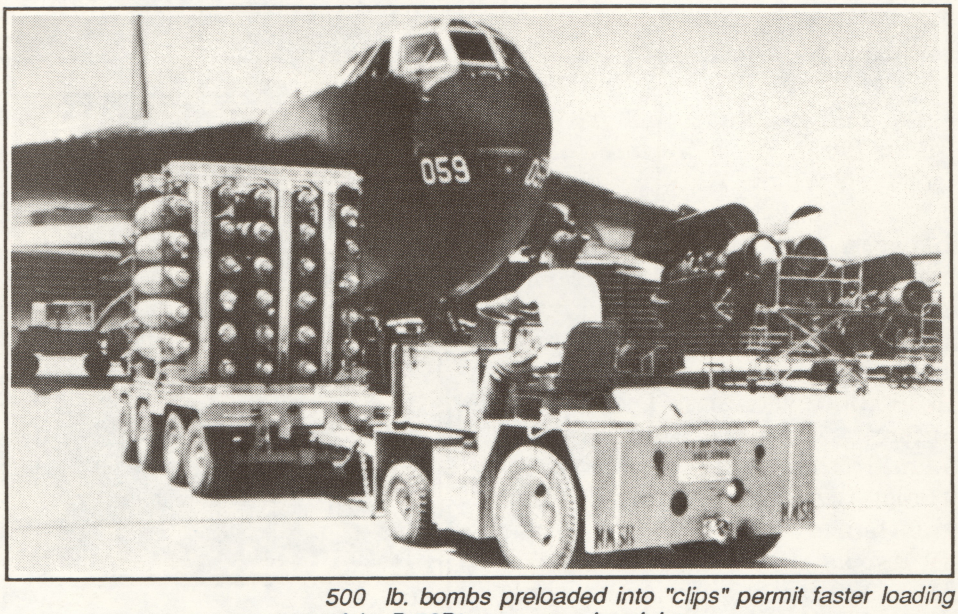
Stratofortress operations throughout the war in Vietnam were known as 'Arc Light'. These operations began on 17 February 1965 when military personnel from Barksdale AFB and Mather AFB deployed to Andersen AFB, Guam. One month earlier, KC-135 Tankers of the 4252nd Strategic Wing had been activated at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, to provide aerial refueling for the Pacific Air Forces fighter bombers. The KC-135 was essential for the B-52 operations, and from that point, it was part of the plan.

Both Wings consisted entirely of B-52Fs able to carry fifty-one 750-pound bombs, twenty-seven internally and twenty-four externally. The only modification made to the aircraft was to add black paint over the nuclear anti-blast white on aircraft undersides to make them less visible from the ground.

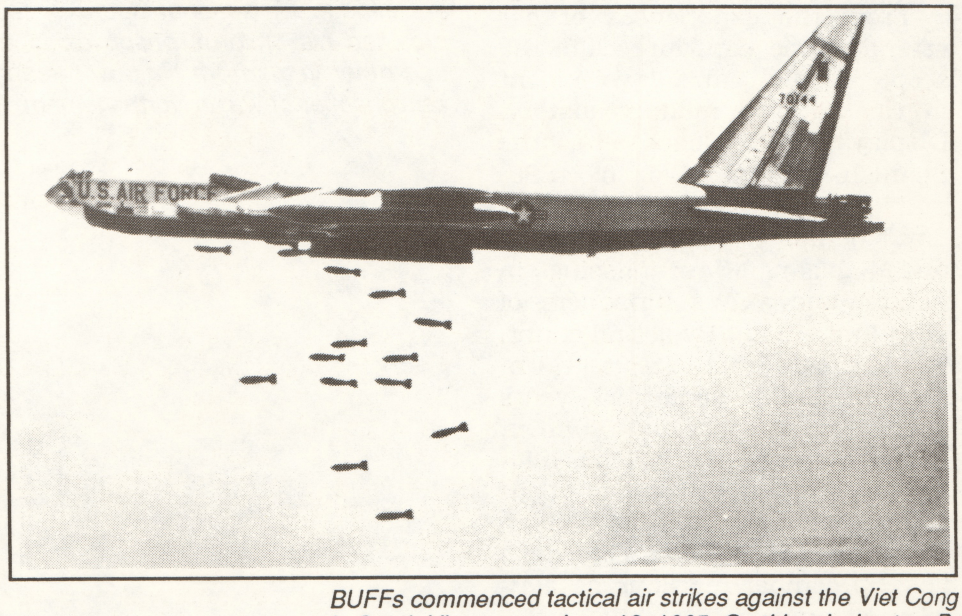
By June 18, the BUFFs were ready to make their first strike. Twenty-seven were launched from Guam to hit Viet Cong Bases in Binh Duong province north of Saigon. Both crews and planners came away from the mission with some harsh lessons learned. During their first aerial refueling, two B-52s collided and broke apart in flames. Eight of the twelve crewman aboard died.

After getting to the target area, 750-pound and 1,000-pound bombs were released over a large area before the BUFFs returned home. After assessing the results,

(Continued on Page 11)



500 lb. bombs preloaded into "clips" permit faster loading of the B-52D's cavernous bomb bay.
(USAF via Squadron/Signal)



BUFFs commenced tactical air strikes against the Viet Cong in South Vietnam on June 18, 1965. On this mission two B-52s collided during in-flight refueling, resulting in the loss of both aircraft and 8 of the 12 aircrewmen. (USAF)

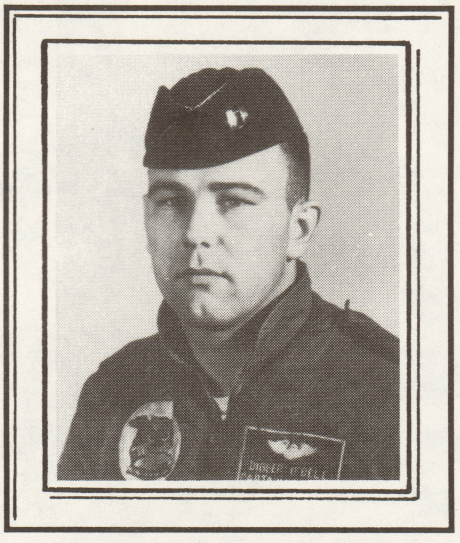
Michigan's Own, Inc.

Military and Space Museum

A one-of-a-kind military museum lies a mere hundred miles north of Willow Run, which puts it practically in the middle between the Mid-Michigan and Saginaw Valley Divisions. Michigan's Own, Inc., in historic Frankenmuth, is dedicated to the military experiences of Michigan's 1,090,000 veterans. Displays of uniforms, medals and photos herald the feats of Medal of Honor recipients, astronauts and the famed World War I "Polar Bears" as they called the men of the 339th Infantry, the only United States troops ever to fight on Russian soil during and after World War I.

From the experiences of her veterans, one can appreciate the scope of Michigan's involvement in the nation's military history. Displays date back to the Spanish-American War of 1898, and continue up to the present day, including a special section on Michigan MIAs (Missing in Action) and POWs (Prisoners of War) in Vietnam. By actual count, 75 Michigan men are still unaccounted for some 15 years after the end of that conflict. Other displays record the military experiences of some of Michigan's governors, such as William B. Millikin of Traverse City, who flew 50 combat missions as a B-24 waist gunner.

A large number of the displays chronicle Michigan men in space, beginning with Capt. Ivan Kincheloe, who set a world altitude record of 156,200 feet on September 7, 1956, in the Bell X-2 rocket-propelled aircraft. Astronauts from Michigan include Gen. James McDivitt of Jackson (Gemini IV, Apollo 9), LCol. Alfred Worden also of Jackson (Apollo 15), Col. Jack Lousma of Grand Rapids (3rd Shuttle, Skylab), LCdr. Roger B. Chaffee, also of Grand Rapids (who died in the Apollo 1 fire), Cdr. David Leestma of Muskegon (13th Shuttle mission), and Capt. Brewster Shaw of Cass City, a shuttle-pilot on the 9th mission and Commander of the 23rd mission.



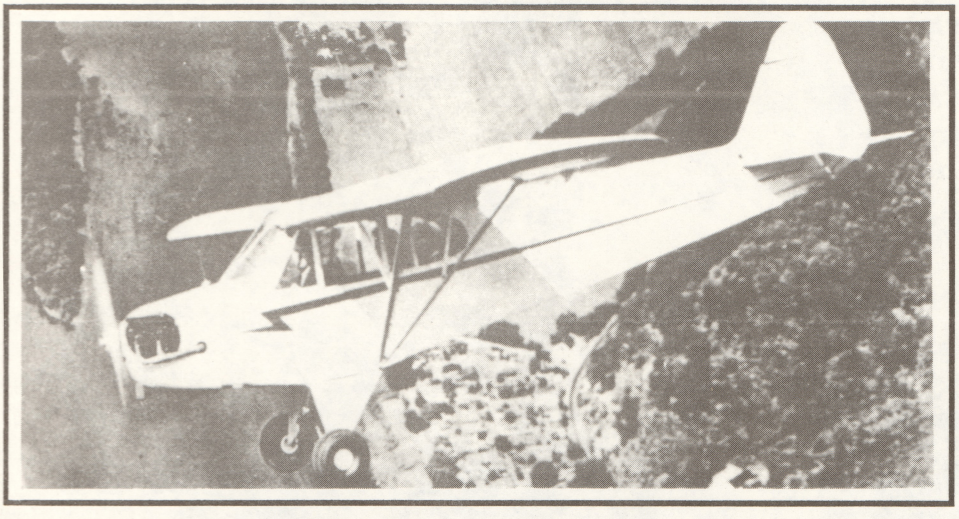
Lieutenant Colonel Donald "Digger" Odell, a Michigan resident stationed at Selfridge Air National Guard Base, provided his uniform, prison clothing and other items from his 5 1/2 years as a prisoner-of-war in North Vietnam.

The idea for Michigan's Own, Inc. was conceived by Museum Directors Stan and Lou Bozich, during a 1974 tour of the Soviet Union. Every city, town and village in Russia has museums recognizing the military contributions of its citizens. The Bozichs felt the patriotic fervor exhibited by the Russians was worthy of emulation in the United States, and they chose to begin with their home state of Michigan. The result is Michigan's Own, Inc., a museum unlike any other in our country.

The museum is located in a former school building on Frankenmuth's main street, about half a mile North of Zehnder's. Your $2.00 admission includes a guided tour and as much time as you wish browsing. Many of the exhibits are frequently changed, so there is always something new to see. Although there is no gift shop, you may purchase a copy of Stan's book which describes Michigan's Medal of Honor recipients. Group tours are both welcome and encouraged. For arrangements and information of group discounts, call Michigan's Own, Inc., at (517) 652-8005.

Lightweight Heavyweight – The Piper Cub

by Jack B. Stankrauff



PIPER CUB – The "Model T" of civilian aircraft provided weekend flyers with hours of aerial enjoyment. This little plane was immensely popular with thousands of part-time recreational pilots.

No other civilian aircraft in this country has ever made such an impact on aviation as the Piper Cub. It was – and still is – a legend and deserves a place in flying history annals.

In 1930, William T. Piper bought out the Taylor Brothers Aircraft Corporation. He began building and marketing a small, lightweight, inexpensive aircraft which a pilot could enjoy for recreation during a weekend as well as leisure time. (This unique little plane has compared historically to Henry Ford's Model T automobile which was also within the financial grasp of almost everyone.)

By 1938, Piper sold 736 of his J-3 Cubs. The plucky little airplane was so popular by 1940 that 3,000 were sold. The J-3 Cub wasn't luxurious and wasn't exactly awesome. It was just a light plane. Its wing span was 35 ft. 2 and 1/2 in., length: 22 and 1/4 ft., height: 6 and 3/4 ft., gross weight: 1,100 lbs., empty weight: 635 lbs., and had a 65 hp Continental engine which flew the Cub through the air at speeds from 85 to 90 mph. Yet in 1947 when the last J-3s rolled off the assembly line, the number built totalled 14,125!

Wartime Service

During World War II, the Cub put on war paint and became the L-4 Grasshopper. The U.S. Army successfully used it for artillery spotting, as a trainer, transport ambulance and for general reconnaissance. It was a durable aircraft and could land and take off on any level patch of dirt. The Grasshopper's wing span was 35 ft. 2 in., length: 22 ft., 3 in., gross weight: 1,220 lbs., and speed: 87 mph. Wartime production totalled 5,673 L-4s.

L-4 Grasshoppers hardly made headlines but they were very vital planes. L-4s flew from LSTs (Landing Ship, Tank) equipped with specially-built decks off the beaches of Okinawa and Anzio – to mention a few.

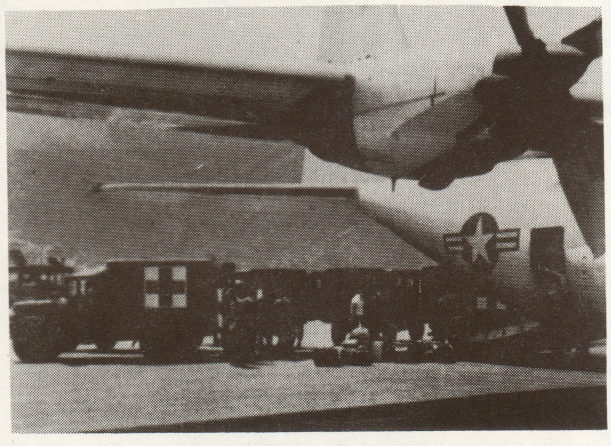
L-4 Grasshoppers were considered very vital by the enemy, too. German Luftwaffe pilots got two points toward an air medal for shooting one down. (Compare this with three points for down-

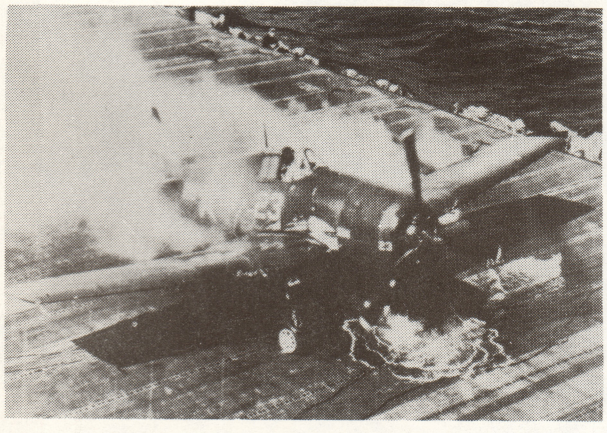
I(Continued on Page 13)

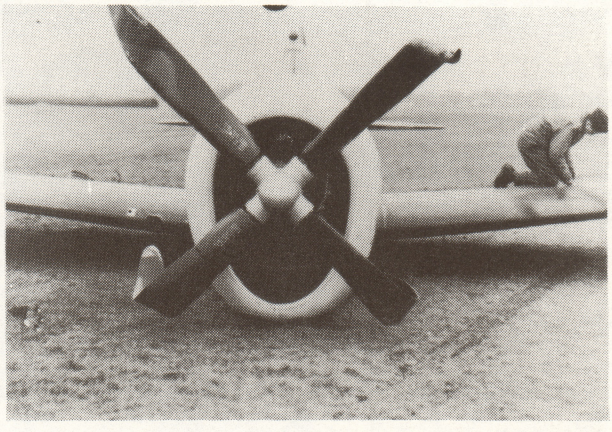
Piper L-4 was the Cub "in uniform."

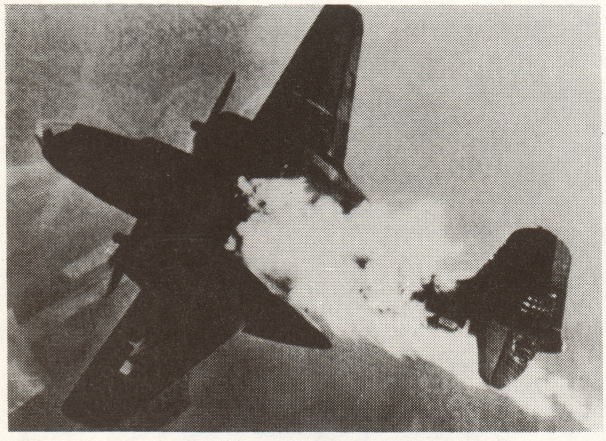
Yankee WINGS
THE PHOTO SECTION

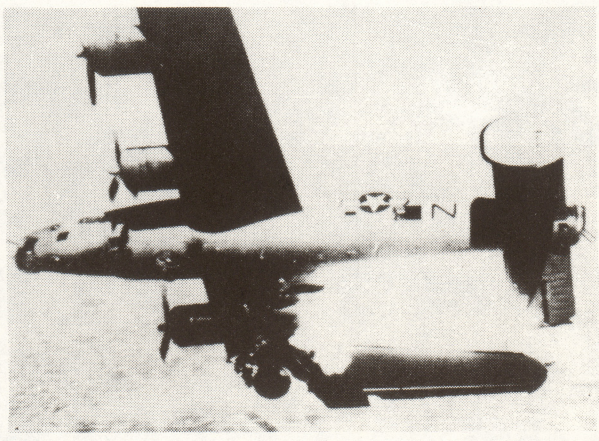
Through the years, the camera has recorded a variety of aviation-related wartime experiences that were far from pleasant. YAF members have contributed these scenes of situations that reflect varying degrees of tragedy.











Museumology

News from the Yankee Air Museum and other related museums

YANKEE AIR MUSEUM OPENS UNIFORM ROOM

At an April 16 ribbon-cutting ceremony, the latest addition to the Yankee Air Museum was opened to the public. The Uniform Room is a walk-through display area, connecting the Willow Run and World War II Rooms. It consists of numerous military uniforms, displayed on mannequins and busts. Full uniforms displayed include a WWI pilot, as well as a USAAF pilot, bomber crewman, Navy enlisted dress uniform, and WAC (Women's Army Corps) and WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service) uniforms from the WWII era. There are also post-WWII uniforms and a number of partial uniforms displayed on upper torso busts. Airplane propellers, a small sword display, and an array of uniform hats compliment the overall effect.

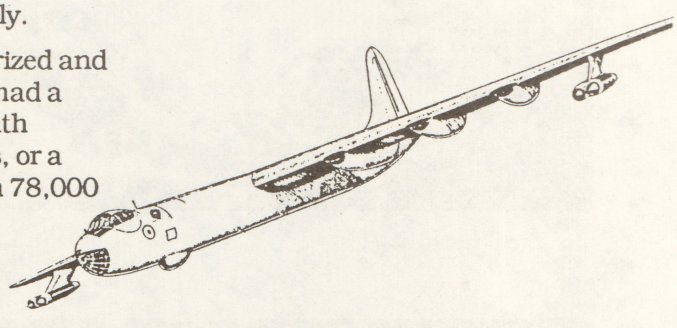
World War II Aircraft Quiz

by Anthony M. Giacobbe, #1691, NE Division

1. What huge transport was originally designed as a glider, was subsequently fitted with six engines and used extensively?
2. What British liaison plane had leading edge wing slats and retractable flaps (features found on modern jetliners), which gave it great STOL capability?
3. Name three aces killed as test pilots.
4. What large Douglas experimental bomber, first flown on June 27, 1941, was almost as big as a B-36, but was underpowered, and relegated to a transport role?
5. What was the US Navy's largest flying boat?
6. What was unusual about the Enola Gay's inner propellers?
7. What was the US's first flying experimental jet bomber?
8. What were the C-108 and C-109?
9. When was the B-36 first authorized and designed?

Answers:

1. ME 323 Gigante (Giant)
2. Westland Lysander
3. Major Richard Bong, F-80, Capt. Don Gentile, F-80; Lt. George Welch, F-84 (He was one of the P-40 pilots who shot down Japanese planes during the Pearl Harbor attack.)
4. B-19
5. Martin Mars
6. They were taken from a B-32, and unlike the B-29's were reversible, in order to slow down the plane during an aborted takeoff.
7. Douglas XB-43
8. Cargo versions of the B-17 and B-24, respectively.
9. The B-36 was authorized and designed in 1941. It had a 10,000 mile range with 10,000 lbs. of bombs, or a 3850 mile range with 78,000 lbs. of bombs.



THE MEN AND THE MEDAL

(Continued from Page 3)

canister would explode, and ten seconds later the magnesium would ignite, causing a blast furnace of heat, reaching some 4,000 degrees Fahrenheit!

More than 40 shrapnel wounds laced Levitow's right leg and hip, yet he got to his feet and helped one of the more severely wounded men to the front of the aircraft. On turning around, he saw to his horror the live flare lying between the number one gun and some ammunition cans.

"From that point on, I didn't remember a thing. My mind went blank," he said later. As his wounded comrades watched, Airman Levitow moved to the rear of the wildly pitching aircraft and fell on the flare. Slowly and painfully he dragged himself, with the flare under his body, to the open cargo door, his wounds leaving a bright trail of blood. All but unconscious now, and with his last reserve of strength, he heaved the flare out the door. Moments after it left the plane, the flare exploded and passed from sight.

Levitow remembered being conscious as the cripped aircraft landed at Bien Hoa, where he was placed aboard a medivac helicopter, still wearing his radio headset. Major Carpenter later pieced together what happened by studying the trail of blood on the cabin floor. He recommended Levitow for the Medal of Honor, saying that he had " . . . never seen such a courageous act, performed under such adverse circumstances."

When John Levitow was decorated with the Medal of Honor by President Richard Nixon, May 14, 1970, at the White House, he became the only enlisted man and the youngest recipient of the Air Force award in the Vietnam War. Asked what made him risk his life to jettison the flare, Levitow chuckled and said, "Temporary insanity."

AMAZIN' MR. LIBBY

(Continued from Page 4)

enemy aircraft with its guns blazing. As bullets ripped the fabric on the wing, Libby grabbed the Lewis gun from its stowed position, and manhandled it to its mount. Then he fell backwards, and the gun fell on top of him. As he struggled to get up and get the gun into action, the gunner saw the foe dead ahead of them in a steep bank. As in the previous drills, Libby squeezed off the full drum of ammo, then lost sight of the Hun, as he reached for a replacement drum.

The attacker did not reappear, and soon the formation was winging its way homeward. Fred felt a slap on the head, and realized the pilot wanted to shake his hand. Upon landing, the wing commander met their aircraft, and also shook his hand. The fledgling gunner was being congratulated for shooting down the German, a feat of which he was not aware. On his first day in the squadron, Fred Libby had been introduced to machine guns and aircraft, had flown his first operational mission, and had vanquished an enemy in combat – all between the hours of ten in the morning and four in the afternoon!

Libby went on to become the first American airman ever to shoot down five enemy aircraft. In fact he became a "double ace", shooting down ten of the enemy, before he traded his gunner's position for that of a pilot. Upon getting his pilot's wings, he repeated his incredible feat of gunnery by downing an Albatros fighter on his first operational mission. He finished his combat flying with 14 kills as a pilot and 10 as a gunner, for a total of 24, which was just two shy of that posted by America's "Ace of Aces", Eddie Rickenbacker.

BUFF Briefs

(Continued from Page 5)

little effective damage could be found – giving the media a field day on "swatting flies with sledgehammers".

General William C. Westmoreland, who was convinced of the aircraft's potential, stated in defense that the mission did disrupt VC activity. As with all new ventures, it would take some time to use this weapon effectively.

Before year's end, the bombers racked up over a hundred missions with ever-improving results. The 7th, 454th and 320th Wings, in turn, relieved the force at Anderson as the Wings rotated crews and aircraft from the States. By November, the first direct ground support strikes were flown in addition to saturation bombing of Viet Cong positions which were the primary objective.

On 16 November, eighteen Stratoforts were launched in support of the First Air Cavalry Division in the Ia Drang Valley – 344 tons of bombs were dropped, the first of a total of 1,795 tons during ninety-six sorties. On 12 December, B-52s were sent to support the Marines in their "Harvest Moon" Operation about twenty miles south of Da Nang. The results were impressive as were the timing of the mission and the bombing with its overall effects.

In December of 1965, the entire B-52D fleet entered the "Big Belly" modification program which increased their internal bomb load capacity from twenty-seven bombs to forty-two 750-pound bombs or eighty-four 500-pound bombs. This put the maximum bomb load up to 60,000 pounds – quite an awesome conventional punch! The D Model became 'the conventional' bomber and its role was projected to last past the year 2000.

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Membership Report

by Charlie Lingenfelter

The following 49 new members have joined the Yankee Air Force since January 1, 1988 through May 18, 1988.

Mid-Michigan has signed up 2908 Martha Brewer. **Wisconsin/ Illinois** has enlisted 2905 Ted Dobrick and 2926 Raymond G. Laper. **North East Division** welcomes 2918 Frank Marcus, 2924 Steven C. Wieczorek, 2925 Eva Wieczorek, 2933 William G. Force, 2934 Stanley Jankowski, 2935 Paula Jankowski and 2956 Laurie Campbell, **Willow Run Division** new members are 2906 Dan Higgenbottom, 2907 Donald Ebling, 2909 Lee S. Jacobsen, 2910 Roger A. Johnson, 2911 Samuel Goss, 2912 Osman Yagcioglu, 2913 Ken Brown, 2914 Dale Feigley, 2915 Melvin Pomerantz, 2916 Michael W. Hall, 2917 Thomas A. Shafer, 2919 Larry Wall, 2920 William B. McCarville, 2921 Walter H. Toles Jr., 2922 Thomas C. Savickas, 2923 Daniel Findley, 2927 Marvin D. Stevens, 2928 James Leslie, 2929 Richard Roberts, 2930 Michael R. Moomaw, 2931 Frank T. Thomas, 2932 James W. Betty Jr., 2936 Tom E. Wright, 2937 Jeffrey Tertzakian, 2938 Thomas Featherstone, 2939 Mary Ciolek, 2940 Sherry Evans, 2941 Timothy J. Panek, 2942 Loree Gallagher, 2943 John W. Steininger, 2944 William J. Flavin, 2945 Michael C. Hoskins, 2946 Lloyd Marlow, 2947 Mitchell A. Zywot, 2948 W. Chris Miller, 2949 Ralph D. Kuenz, 2950 Mike Cayley, 2951 Jane Cayley, 2952 Keith Woolum, 2954 Bonnie Fore, 2955 Richard Prince, 2957 Harry Friedman, 2958 Charles Hill, 2959 Ronald J. Gabrys, 2960 Wilbur G. Simpson, 2961 William H. Bilk, 2962 Charles Bartosek, 2963 Joseph L. Suarez, 2964 Kenneth Lingenfelter and 2965 James A. Brennan. **Saginaw Valley** welcomes 2953 Judy Crawford.

ATTENTION

Yankee Air Force Headquarters is authorized to accept MASTERCARD and VISA charges. Current members and new applicants can now submit their charge number, expiration date and signature on the renewal form or new member application form for payment.

National Board Approves Dues Increase

by Jim Hanford

The discussion was lengthy, but when the vote was taken, the outcome was decisive. At their regular April meeting, the National Board voted to increase the annual dues for most members by $5.00, effective on July 1, 1988. The new schedule will increase the cost for a regular member from $30.00 to $35.00, and from $20.00 to $25.00 for an Associate member. The cost of a Life membership and initiation fees were not changed. The vote was 11 in favor and 3 opposed.

As was reported last month, the question had been discussed at the February meeting. Then it was proposed to make the increase $10.00 for the same member classes, and offer a discount on prices in the Gift Shop and on admissions to YAF-sponsored events at Willow Run. The Board, however, voted to return the motion to the Membership Committee, and in its final form, neither provision was included.

This action was not taken lightly. During the discussion, many points were made, both pro and con. Ultimately, however, the Board could not escape the fact that, since dues were last increased in 1984, the cost of nearly everything has risen, but our dues structure has not kept pace. As if to further emphasize the point, the Board also voted on the final version of the 1988 budget, in excess of $281,000, even after much hard-nosed pruning. See the Editorial in this issue for a fuller discussion of the dues increase. (An in-depth article on the 1988 budget is planned for our next issue.)

Among other items discussed during the meeting were reports from the library staff, the B-17 restoration crew and the elections committee. The 1988 election will be handled in a similar manner to last year's election. Nominations must be submitted in writing on the approved form. Forms were mailed to each division, and were available at the hangar before Memorial Day. They had to be submitted to the Elections Committee by June 30, 1988.

DIVISION NEWS

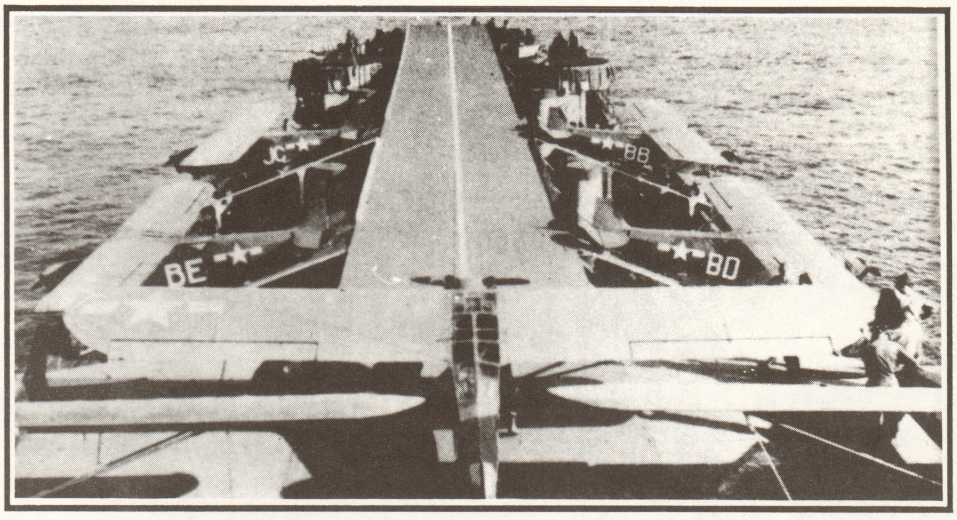
The Yankee Air Museum was closed to the public, and most of the aircraft removed from the hangar on Saturday, April 23, to provide facilities for a joint exercise in which the emergency response teams of some 22 hospitals were expected to participate. The WI/IL Stateline Division reported work continues on the AT-11 restoration project, and their fly-in is scheduled for the day following the end of the EAA Convention in Oshk.osh. They have requested that the B-25 attend, if possible. Saginaw Valley Division reported that some 90 persons attended the FAA Safety Seminar in March. The L-2 right wing restoration is completed, and the ribs and spars needed to start the left wing have been fabricated. Their July 17 Air Show has been cancelled.

TALE SPINS

(Continued from Page 7)

ing an unescorted four-engined bomber, two for an escorted two-engined bomber, and one for a fighter.) In fact, German ground troops could get 15 days leave for bringing down a light liaison plane. Indeed, Grasshoppers flying over the front lines were easy targets for antiaircraft fire, rifle fire and enemy fighters. (One over-zealous Me-109 pilot, trying to chase an L-4 in tight turns, flew too close to the ground and crashed. Incidentally, the L-4 pilot rightly got credit!)

All in all, merely mentioning the Piper Cub will evoke instant recognition and renew pleasant memories to pilots, passengers and aviation history buffs.



An Army aircraft carrier – an LST configured to operate light observation aircraft in WWII. The "flight deck" is a mere 70 ft. long and 12 ft. wide, but with a slight headwind the tiny liaison planes are able to take off in about 50 feet.

(U.S. Army Signal Corps Photo)

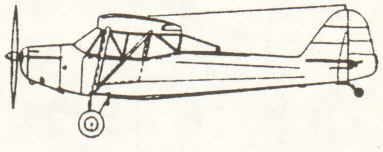
Restoration News

Flyable Aircraft Readied for Air Show Season

In late February the propellers were reinstalled on the C-47. On March 30 the newly refurbished ailerons were reinstalled, which was an all-day job. Then the hangar doors were opened and the B-25 and C-47 were rolled out on the ramp. The engines on both aircraft were fired up, and compression checks were made. Only the left engine started on the B-25, and an investigation of possible starter problems began on the right engine. On the last day of March, pilots Dick Bodycomb and Don Harmer with crewmen Pat Nugent and Don Burke flew six touch-and-go landings in *Yankee Doodle Dandy* without problems. Show-time is not far off.

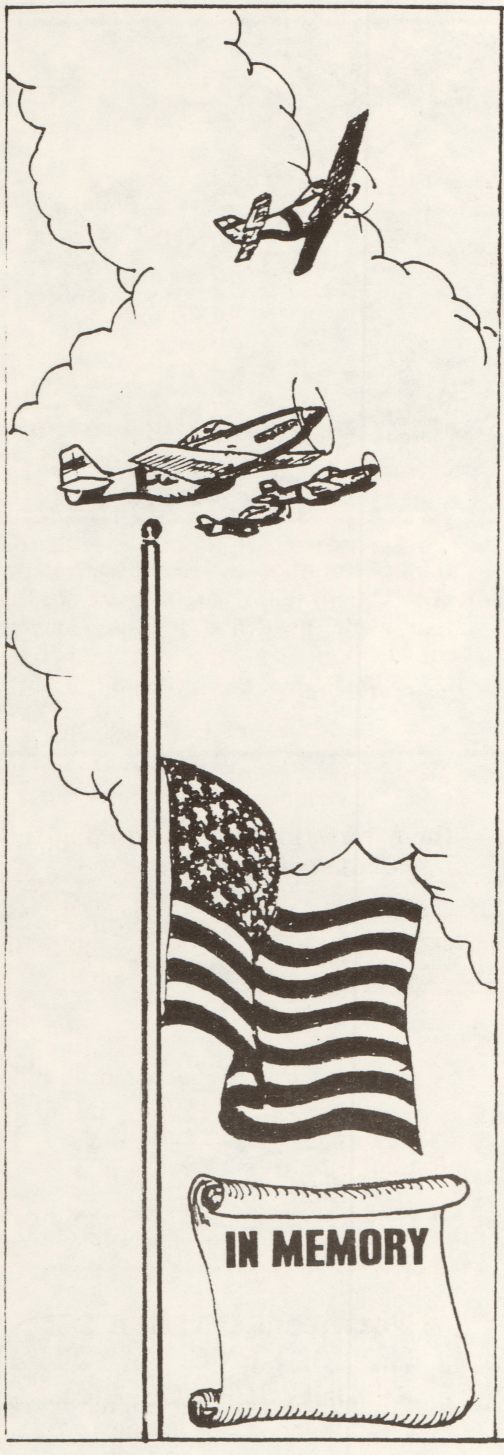
Yankee Lady

One knew from the clatter of rivet guns that something was in progress as Fred Lockwood, Don Burke and Bill Lindsay were shooting rivets into the rudder, and Norm Ellickson and Charlie Greenwald worked on top of the fuselage. Concurrently a buffing operation was progressing on a wing. Another crew continued to work on the tail section, in anticipation of reinstallation of the tail cone before Memorial Day. As Al Dallape finished overhauling the hydraulic pump on the pre-oiler, Grant Schwarz and John Ward drained and filtered the oil in all four engines. Work also continued on the brakes. Norm Ellickson found a source for obtaining brake expander tubes which will provide a quality job and for a much better price than had been previously quoted. Brake blocks have also been purchased at a cost of $800, and one of the four blocks has been installed. Dean Greene acquired a 35mm print reader for $1.00, and it provides the crew with the ability to scan blue-prints of the entire aircraft. The main gear tires have been removed from their rims in preparation for the installation of new tires.



Northeast Division L-2

The Northeast Division's L-2 has received the necessary work and "tender, loving care" to get it back into the air. All "gripes" found in the course of her annual inspection were addressed, and the machine is again legal. Required repairs included work on the brakes, replacing the muffler and flexible ducts, and getting the carburetor re-safetyed. It was hoped that the aircraft would have had a test flight by the end of April.



In Memoriam

Previously, *Yankee Wings* has not had a system in place to note the death of a member. In an attempt to belatedly address this subject, the Membership Office has provided the following list of members who have died during the period of April 1, 1987 to April 1, 1988:

Larry Barnes – #2805
Howard J. Boos – #0176
George East – #0682
Lillie Elsey – #2018
Don Fox – #0694
Howard Jeffery – #2819
John H. Kopka – #1367
Jacob Kutscher – #0671
James R. Miller – #2538
Donald Richter – #0401

With this issue a member's passing will be noted on this page, upon notification from the Membership Office. Unless the survivors have indicated otherwise, a short obituary will be published.

RAY BUEHLER
April 3, 1988

Ray Buehler (YAF 057), 56, was a founding member of the YAF, having joined in November, 1981. He was quite active in the Antique Aircraft Association, and had recently acquired an OX-5 engine. He was also interested in skydiving and orinthology.

YAF People

Noteworthy Items About Members

USAF Senior Airman Jeffrey Waterbury (YAF1567) has been named Airman of the Month at George AFB, California. Jeff is an aircraft systems specialist with the 27th Tactical Air Support Squadron. When he returns home upon completion of his USAF duty, maybe he can put his knowledge to good use for the YAF. Congratulations, Jeff! (Via *The Ypsilanti Press* and *Yankee Newsletter.*)

REUNIONS

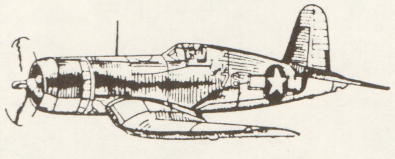
20AF Association: Aug. 29-Sep. 4; Anaheim, CA; Contact Col. John Misterly, 1400 S. Sunkist St., No. 88, Anaheim, CA 92806.

Any WWII AAF Troop Carrier Unit: Member Bill Wehr has offered to assist former members of WWII AAF Troop Carrier Units in contacting their respective units for reunion information. Contact William L. Wehr, R.D. #1, Box 193, Watsontown, PA 17777. Please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope for his reply.

401st B.G., 8 AF, Stationed at Deenethorpe: Sep. 15-18, Dearborn, MI; Contact Ralph Trout, P.O. Box 22044, Tampa, FL 33622

NOTICE

Are you an individual who plans a major gift to the YAF in the next year? $1,000 to $5,000 or more? Let me show you how to multiply that gift by 5 - 25 - 100 times and retain significant tax advantages: Mann Associates, Fergus "Doc" Mann, YAF G1498SV, (517) 799-8640.



Aviation Cookbooks

The WI/IL Stateline Division still has some cookbooks available. If you are interested, contact: Larry Wixom, YAF WI/IL Stateline Division, P.O. Box 1667, Janesville, WI 53547-1667, for details.

You Can Make A Difference

The YAF Headquarters at Willow Run is an old building with a past that ranges from glorious to derelict. It was derelict in 1981 when the YAF took it over. It got a new lease on life through the efforts of a band of hard workers with a dream. The hours were long and hard, but it was the only work available for there were no airplanes to work on then. Although much progress has been made, fewer people are working on the hangar because it is more fun to work on aircraft. We cannot forget that the airplanes need a home, nor that it requires money to maintain both the aircraft and their home. Below are some ways in which you can help:

Remodeling. Remodeling and maintenance are continuous jobs, far too often accomplished by one man, John Spellich. Some have helped with special projects, but later drift off to their other jobs. An urgent need is a strong man who enjoys building work, and has time during the week to assist John. If several men volunteer, an experienced crew could be formed.

Woodshop. We have an excellent woodshop manned by Ray Gillman and Rich Hapunowicz. Working just a few hours each week (Sundays and Wednesday mornings), they have built many needed projects saving us thousands of dollars. Consider 60 folding tables (which cost $4.00 each to rent), or in excess of 100 storm windows saving untold heating dollars. Ray has more projects planned but needs helping hands. One project is the production of toy airplanes and helicopters for sale by the Gift Shop. He is a craftsman, and would enjoy training someone if necessary.

Electrical. Again, one man, Chuck Thomas, cannot do everything alone. The list is long, including housekeeping, outside maintenance, fence repair, painting. Perhaps it sounds like your job list at home, and that's not surprising. But there is one difference – *"Aviation is spoken here!"* Why not try working on one of the hangar crews for a specified period of time, and ask yourself if additional rewards aren't there? Contact Barbara Sutton at the hangar, 483-4030, or at home, 533-7237.

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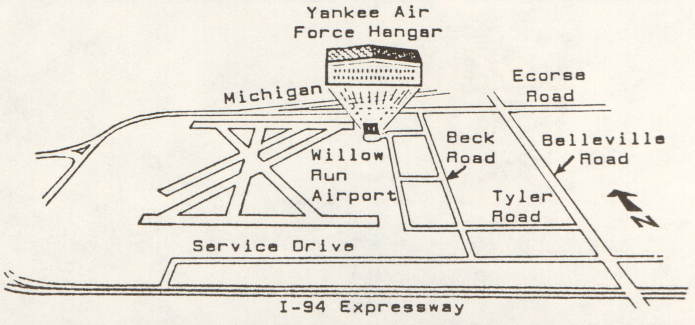
YAF HEADQUARTERS – WILLOW RUN AIRPORT

Take I-94 to Belleville Road exit, North to Tyler Road, west to Beck Road, turn right and enter through second gate on your left. Or take I-275 to exit 20 – Ecorse Road. Take Ecorse Road west to Beck, proceed south to first gate.



CALENDAR

JULY 1988

6 – Headquarters Division General Membership (WR)
6 – Northeast Division Board – 7:00 (NE)
9 – Security Committee – 10:00 (WR)
10 – B-17 Divisional Work Party (WR)
12 – Saginaw Valley Division Board (SV)
12 – Membership Staff (WR)
13 – B-17 Crew (WR)
13 – Mid-Michigan Division General Membership – 7:00 (MM)
14 – Wisconsin/Illinois Division General Membership (WI/IL)
19 – Saginaw Valley Division General Membership (SV)
20 – National Board of Governors (WR)
20 – Northeast Division General Membership – 7:00 (NE)
21 – Publications Staff (WR)
26 – Wisconsin/Illinois Division Board – 7:00 (WI/IL)
27 – Mid-Michigan Division Board (MM)

AUGUST 1988

3 – Headquarters Division General Membership (WR)
3 – Northeast Division Board – 7:00 (NE)
7 – B-17 Divisional Work Party (WR)
9 – Saginaw Valley Division Board (SV)
9 – Membership Staff (WR)
10 – B-17 Crew (WR)
10 – Mid-Michigan General Membership – 7:00 (MM)
11 – Wisconsin/Illinois Division General Membership (WI/IL)

AUGUST 1988 (Continued)

13 – Security Committee – 10:00 (WR)
16 – Saginaw Valley Division General Membership (SV)
17 – National Board of Governors (WR)
17 – Northeast Division General Membership (NE)
18 – Publications Staff (WR)
23 – Wisconsin/Illinois Division Board (WI/IL)
24 – Mid-Michigan Division Board (MM)

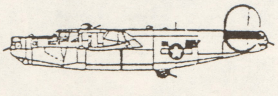
SEPTEMBER 1988

7 – Headquarters General Membership (WR)
7 – Northeast Division Board – 7:00 (NE)
10 – Security Committee – 10:00 (WR)
13 – Saginaw Valley Division Board (SV)
13 – Membership Staff (WR)
14 – B-17 Crew (WR)
14 – Mid-Michigan General Membership – 7:00 (MM)
15-17 – 401st Bomb Group Reunion, Dearborn, MI*
17-18 – 7th Annual Founders' Day Fly-In (WR)*
20 – Saginaw Valley General Membership (SV)
21 – National Board of Governors (WR)
21 – Northeast Division General Membership – 7:00 (NE)
27 – Wisconsin/Illinois Division Board – 7:00 (WI/IL)
28 – Mid-Michigan Division Board (MM)

* *

NOTES:

1. All meetings begin at 7:30 PM, unless otherwise noted.
2. An entry marked with an asterisk (*) indicates more information may be found elsewhere in this issue.
3. Any additions or corrections to the calendar should be submitted to Stan Reich, Tel. (313) 427-8014.



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